

Reading: gapped texts

- 1 PAPER 1, PART 2 You are going to read an article from a newspaper on page 35. Six paragraphs have been removed from the extract. Choose from the paragraphs A–G the one which fits each gap 1–6. There is one extra paragraph which you do not need to use.

A

'They've not much to look forward to,' Platt admits, 'and so something like today's event really does give them a focus. In many ways, it's not so much a luxury as a lifesaver. When the Meerkatz last played, we had no reports that evening of any prisoner self-harming. These kinds of things make them feel better about themselves, it lifts their spirits. That's very encouraging to us.'

B

Back in the hall, it's almost five o'clock now. A side door opens, and the national treasure finally emerges. The crowd immediately start shouting: 'WHO ARE YOU? WHO ARE YOU?' but it's good-natured and fun, and after a flurry of 'sorrys', Bragg accompanies the Meerkatz and all seven finalists in a shambolic version of 'Route 66', twirling the arsonist round and round with an outstretched arm. So whipped up in the atmosphere does he become that, as the band segues into 'Johnny B Goode', he removes his jacket and, uncharacteristically, indulges in the kind of overly elbowed dance familiar to all drunken uncles of a certain age. 'I'm playing with the Pogues in Manchester tomorrow night,' he tells the cheering, jeering crowd at one point. 'I can't see it getting any wilder than this, can you?'

C

'In the past,' Platt tells me, 'we've found art therapy to be highly beneficial for inmates. A lot of the women we have here suffer from mental health disorders, or from drug problems, and a great many of them self harm. For all sorts of reasons, then, these are very damaged women, and while we can offer no magic cure, we have found that by engaging their creative side we can often help them, if you like, "escape" their surroundings. Because nobody controls your thoughts, do they?'

D

'I never ask the prisoners I meet why they are inside,' he responds tartly. 'When I'm with them, I'm dealing with them strictly as individuals. What they did to get themselves in here in the first place is none of my business. I don't want to judge them on that, not least because they've been judged on it already – they're banged up, aren't they? And anyway, these instruments aren't presents, they're a challenge, a challenge for them to try to make something of themselves. My hope is that they will see this as an opportunity to take that first step on the path back to society.'

PAPER 1, PART 2 Following a line of argument in a text

Remember:

- Read through the whole text before attempting the task, to get an idea of the development of the text.
- Read through all of the options before choosing an answer.
- One opinion may be followed by an opposing point of view, so look out for this.

E

'It's all very well practising the song in my cell, like,' she tells me afterwards, scratching at the self-inflicted scars that line her arms like irregular train tracks, 'but on stage, with all the lights, the microphone and the crowd – well, that's another story.'

F

The singer-songwriter Billy Bragg was supposed to be here an hour ago in his role as figurehead of the Jail Guitar Doors initiative, bringing with him £1600 worth of donated musical instruments, but he is currently stuck in traffic on a motorway far, far away. By the time he does finally turn up, huffing and puffing and full of apology, many of the congregated prisoners here will very likely have already made bail. But few right now are lamenting his tardiness. As the Meerkatz reach the climax of the Band Aid Christmas perennial, seven young women congregate on the side of the stage, each of them glammed up for their moment in the spotlight, and anxious for the microphone.

G

The Guy's Marsh project went well, so much so that when Bragg was later invited to the NME Awards he decided to use the event to give the campaign some necessary oxygen. Taking the stage, he told the assembled wealthy rock stars of his plans to raise sufficient funds to get acoustic guitars into every prison in the country, and that he would be willing to accept any and all donations. 'People were very kind, very generous indeed,' he says.



BEHIND BARS: Bragg to bring sound of music to prisons

As part of a unique initiative, Billy Bragg (with a little help from Mick Jones and others) wants to get musical instruments into all of Britain's prisons. But to the Bard of Barking, these aren't gifts: they're potential lifesavers.

Nick Duerden reports

On a makeshift stage that, on any other day, is merely storage space within a cavernous gym hall, a band called the Meerkatz are halfway through a spirited rendition of 'Do They Know It's Christmas?' The singer is a healthcare worker by day here at Styal women's prison in Wilmslow, near Manchester. If the crowd seems more appreciative than one would expect of an audience at three o'clock on a freezing winter's afternoon, it's because it is made up exclusively of inmates who would otherwise be doing, according to prisoner Adele, 'boring stuff like learning how to read and write'.

1 [...]

When Bragg last visited a prison, as part of his year-long trek around Her Majesty's establishments proffering musical gifts as incentives for self-betterment, it was to Pentonville in late November. There, in a small room far from the din and clang of the cells, a group of no more than a dozen inmates turned up to show appreciation. In Styal, however, it's more like 175, and they've taken over the darkened gym for an afternoon of raucous celebration. The Head of Interventions here, Annick Platt, thought it would be a good idea to make a day of it, and ran an X Factor-like competition offering inmates a chance to appear on stage alongside today's visiting national treasure, irrespective of the fact that many of the entrants had little idea precisely who the national treasure was. 'Billy who?' asks Adele. Perhaps tellingly, Adele is just 24.

2 [...]

It is only through art, she continues, that many are able to express themselves at all. Those too shy or too awkward to talk of their pain and suffering with social workers can instead articulate it in painting or poetry, examples of which adorn the walls throughout the complex. After today, they'll also be able to express themselves in song.

3 [...]

Which is why the atmosphere on stage right now is close to fever pitch. True, none of the seven women who won last week's contest is ever likely to impress Simon Cowell with their vocal prowess, but few could fault their enthusiasm. This line-up of excitable, giggling twenty-somethings includes an arsonist and a repeat drug offender. One by one, they come to the centre of the stage and accompany the band on a selection of current hits and old favourites. One of the less serious offenders, twenty-one-year-old Alicia, a heavysset girl with a head full of tight curls and a voice of considerable volume, lets loose on an almighty rendition of Lulu's 'Shout' until stage fright descends, and she runs off, furious with herself.

4 [...]

Alicia, who has never heard of Billy Bragg either but is grateful for his 'support', was raised in a succession of care homes across the north-east of England, and says that anger is her most voluble emotion: 'That's when I'm most likely to sing, when I'm angry. It's how I unstress myself.'

5 [...]

Jail Guitar Doors, Bragg will later explain to me over a meal in a deserted Indian restaurant, is an independent initiative aiming to supply musical equipment to inmates of Her Majesty's prisons nationwide via donations. Taking its name from the B-side of The Clash's 1978 single 'Clash City Rockers', Jail Guitar Doors came into being in the early part of last year after the singer received a letter from Malcolm Dudley, a prison rehabilitation officer at Guy's Marsh in Dorset, asking for help in getting musical instruments into prison on the conviction that they could do good, and perhaps even affect long-term change. Bragg had already undertaken a similar initiative in a hospice, helping dying women articulate their terror of leaving behind family members through music.

6 [...]

'It's not easy getting things like guitars into prisons,' he points out, 'because there's the fear that they could be used as weapons – although they never yet have, to my knowledge. I've spent much of the past twelve months giving the same spiel over and over again to each new governor, and slowly but surely the message is getting out there, and people are becoming increasingly receptive. With good reason, too.' He gives an example. Of those prisoners at Guy's Marsh who actively participated in music sessions before they were paroled, only 10 to 15 per cent have since re-offended. The national average is 61 per cent. 'So there's your proof,' he says. 'It works.'

